

Policy: Whistleblowing

Reviewed: April 2026

Next review: April 2027

Mid-year updates:

Policy Monitoring

Libra Policies are reviewed when the need arises in line with legislation updates, guidance, and useful information we receive in order to improve and enhance our provision. Additionally, Policies are updated annually by relevant members of staff and the Senior Leadership Team.

Equality Statement

We believe that this policy is in line with the Equality Act as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any child or member of staff, and it helps to promote equality at this school.

We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates into all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. We acknowledge the findings of the Race Disparity Audit that clearly shows how people of different ethnicities are treated across the public services of health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

We wish to work closely with the School Council and to hear their views and opinions as we acknowledge and support Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that children should be encouraged to form and to express their views.

Introduction

Libra is committed to maintaining a culture of openness, accountability and integrity. We seek to ensure that every adult connected to the school feels secure in raising concerns about any activity which may harm individuals or undermine the school. The school has adopted this whistle blowing policy to provide clear guidance to those who may need to raise concerns. This policy has been prepared in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and DfE guidance for schools

Don't think what if I'm wrong, think what if I'm right. Whistleblowing has been defined as: "the disclosure by an employee or professional of confidential information which relates to some danger, fraud or other illegal or unethical conduct connected with the work place, be it of the employee or his/her fellow employees". (Public Concern at Work Guidelines 1997)

Libra expects its staff, and others involved in the work of the school, who have serious concerns about any aspect of the school's work to come forward and raise those concerns. A member of staff may be the first person to realise that there could be something seriously wrong within the school. However, they may feel that speaking up would be disloyal to colleagues or to the school. They may also fear harassment or victimisation.

All staff, volunteers, visitors and others connected to the school have a responsibility for whistleblowing. The purpose of this policy is to make it clear that anyone can raise concerns in confidence without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. Staff are encouraged to raise serious concerns in the first instance within the school rather than overlooking a problem or 'blowing the whistle' outside, and it is preferred that the matter is raised when it is just a concern rather than waiting for proof. It also covers those providing services under a contract with the school and organisations working in partnership with the school.

What issues can I whistle blow about?

You are protected by the law if you whistle blow about any of the following:

- any unlawful act, whether criminal or a breach of civil law
- a member of staff or children's health and safety is in danger
- breach of any statutory code of practice
- any failure to comply with appropriate professional standards
- fraud, corruption or dishonesty

- Sexual Harassment
- actions which are likely to cause physical/mental/psychological danger to any person, or to give rise to a risk of significant damage to property
- loss of income to the school through financial fraud
- abuse of power, or the use of the school's powers and authority for any unauthorised or ulterior purpose
- discrimination in the provision of education
- The school is breaking the law, for example it does not have the right insurance
- You believe a member of staff is covering up wrongdoing
- any other matter that staff consider they cannot raise by any other procedure

Personal grievances, for example, bullying or discrimination are not covered by whistleblowing law, unless the concern is in the public interest. You can report this under our school's grievance protocol.

It should be emphasised that this policy is intended to assist anyone who has discovered malpractice or serious wrongdoing, provided they make the disclosure in accordance with the policy. It is not designed to question financial, or business decisions taken by the school, nor may it be used to reconsider any matters that have already been addressed under the harassment, complaint or disciplinary procedures. Individuals who make disclosures outside the arrangements set out here will not be protected under this policy and may not be protected under the Act.

Aims and Objectives:

We aim to:

- encourage anyone to feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon concerns
- provide avenues to raise those concerns and receive feedback on any action taken
- ensure that a response is given to your concerns and how to pursue them if you are not satisfied
- reassure anyone wanting to use this policy will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation if they have a reasonable belief that they have raised any concern in good faith

Protection

It can be difficult for someone to make the decision to report a concern. If a concern is raised in good faith and based on reasonable belief, there should be nothing to fear. The school will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) and will take appropriate action to protect an individual when they raise a concern even if they are genuinely mistaken in their concerns. Any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower would result in disciplinary action against the person responsible. Under The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998, staff are protected from dismissal or other detriment as long as they follow their employers whistle blowing procedure. Any investigations arising from whistleblowing will not influence or be influenced by any other procedures to which an employee may be subject. If an employee's concern is not confirmed by the investigation, no action will be taken against them. If, however it is determined through an investigation that an employee made an allegation frivolously, maliciously or for personal gain, disciplinary action may be taken against them.

How to raise a concern:

- All concerns should be made in person or in writing with your line manager. The earlier a concern is expressed the easier and sooner action can be taken.
- You should voice your concerns, suspicions or uneasiness as soon as you feel you can. If your concern involves your line manager, then you should approach a member of the senior management team.
- If your concern is about anyone personally connected to the Directors or the family who own the Libra school, you can speak with the Deputy Principal, or you can take it to Ofsted or the Local Safeguarding Board if the concern relates to safeguarding. Contact details are in the Safeguarding Policy & Procedures and or Flowcharts.
- Try to pinpoint exactly what practice is concerning you and why.
- Write down concerns and distinguish between fact, hearsay and opinion. Be explicit as possible with fact and hearsay.
- Where possible check the validity of your concerns
- Ideally you should put your concerns in writing, outlining the background and history, giving names, dates and places where you can.

- A person is not expected to prove the truth of an allegation, but you will need to demonstrate sufficient grounds for the concern.
- It may not always be possible to maintain confidentiality, and this will be explained to the person. In such instances, the person will have the choice of either withdrawing or agreeing to his/her identity becoming known to enable the concern to be effectively dealt with.
- The person raising the concern may wish to receive help from a colleague, but it is important that this is done confidentially.
- At any future meeting the employee may be accompanied by a colleague if that is their wish.
- The person receiving the concern should take notes and produce a written summary of the concern raised and provide the person with a copy as soon as practicable after the meeting, along with an indication of how they propose to deal with the matter, where possible.

Investigating the concern

- Once a person has raised a concern, the deputy or principle will carry out, within 10 working days, an initial assessment to determine the scope of any investigation. The person will be informed of the outcome of this assessment in writing including how the concern will be dealt with, how long this will take and any support that is available to them.
- The person raising the concern may be required to attend additional meetings to provide further information.
- The deputy or principle may consider it appropriate to refer the concern to an external agency for consideration in advance of any internal investigation. This may be appropriate where concerns about child safeguarding, potential criminal activity or unsafe working practices are raised. Where this is deemed appropriate, no further internal investigation should be undertaken until clearance is given.
- Where necessary, the school may appoint an investigator or team of investigators, including those with relevant experience of investigations or specialist knowledge of the subject matter. The investigator(s) may make recommendations for change to enable the school to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.
- The deputy or principal will aim to keep the person informed of the progress of the investigation and likely timescale. Sometimes the need for confidentiality may mean that the person cannot be given specific details of the investigation or any disciplinary action taken as a result. The person is required to treat any information about the investigation as strictly confidential.
- Following completion of the inquiry process the investigating team will make a written report and if necessary, action will be taken. This may result in a trigger for the grievance and/or disciplinary procedure to be implemented against the person reported. The report will not contain the whistleblower's name unless they have expressly stated that you wish to be named.
- The person will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.
- If it is concluded that the person has made false allegations maliciously, in bad faith or with a view to personal gain, they could be subject to disciplinary action under the school's disciplinary policy and procedure if they are a member of staff.
- Whilst it cannot always be guaranteed that the outcome will be in line with the person's expectation, concerns will be dealt with fairly and in an appropriate way. There is no right of appeal against any decisions taken under this policy.

External disclosure

If the person believes that the matter has not been taken seriously or is being covered up, they may choose to report the concern externally to an appropriate body detail of which are shown below:

- a Prescribed Person or Body - [Whistleblowing: list of prescribed people and bodies - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies)

Confidentiality

Libra views confidentiality as a two-way process and will endeavour to maintain this approach, though they recognise this cannot always be guaranteed. In return we would expect concerns the person has raised through this policy will remain equally confidential until there has been an opportunity for their assessment. All concerns will be treated in confidence and every effort will be made not to reveal the identity of the person raising the concern if that is their wish. If the school are not able to resolve the person's concern

without revealing their identity, it will be discussed with them beforehand. Libra also wishes to state that although a concern may also be raised anonymously, it may impede the designated investigator(s) ability to undertake a thorough assessment if the person chooses to do so. Libra hope that the protection provided by this policy would negate the need for such actions. Concerns expressed anonymously are much less powerful but may be considered by the school considering:

- the seriousness of the issues raised
- the credibility of the concern
- the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

The deputy or principal will decide in each case whether a complaint made anonymously should be investigated.

Monitoring and evidence

Complaints hard book log

Staff training

All staff undertake training during induction on how to whistle blow and are given the policy to read and sign as understood. This policy is also available to all visitors on the visitor safeguarding noticeboard.

Responsibilities

The senior management team will:

- work in conjunction with the Directors to ensure all school staff, children and parents are aware of and comply with this policy.
- provide an environment that is safe, fun, stimulating and challenging to all children.
- promote an awareness of and respect for a diversity of cultures, values, beliefs and abilities.
- encourage parents to take an active role in policy development where appropriate.
- ensure all relevant risk assessments are in place to ensure a safe school environment.
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality.
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff.
- consider providing remote learning to children in circumstances when in-person attendance is either not possible or contrary to government guidance in accordance with school risk assessments and safeguarding guidance. This might include occasions when:
 - individual children, for a short period, are unable to physically attend school but are able to continue learning.
- monitor and evidence the effectiveness of this policy.

Teaching and learning support staff will:

- comply with all aspects of this policy.
- implement the school's equalities policy and schemes.
- report and deal with all incidents of discrimination.
- attend appropriate training sessions.
- report any concerns they have about any aspect of the school community.
- receive relevant training, periodically and ongoing as required, according to their role.
- have equal chances of training, career development and promotion.
- receive equal opportunities training on induction in order to improve their understanding of the Equality Act 2010 and its implications.

Children will:

- be aware of and contribute to all appropriate policies through the school council.
- work with and support the school council on all agenda items.
- strive to take pride in their work and work to the highest standard that they are capable of.
- listen carefully to all instructions given by the teacher, ask for further help if they do not understand and participate fully in all lessons.
- treat others, their work and equipment with respect.

- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school.
- talk to others without shouting and or using physical aggression and will use language which is neither abusive nor offensive.

Parents and Carers will be encouraged to:

- be aware of and comply with all school policies including this one.
- be encouraged to become involved in policy development by taking part in parent engagement opportunities and by maximising learning opportunities between home and school.
- Keep informed via termly newsletters of the children's curriculum.
- be encouraged to take an active role in the life of the school by attending parent-teacher consultations / Parent Open Days / fundraising and social events.
- ensure regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- notify school on the first day of child absence.
- have holidays out of term time and authorised by school.
- encourage effort and achievement.
- ensure correct school uniform is worn.
- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school.
- speak with children and staff respectfully and expect the same in return.

Linked Policies and documents:

Safeguarding / Complaints / Staff handbook

Policy Location

This policy can be found:

- on SharePoint within the staff and master's folder
- on the school website www.libraschool.co.uk
- available upon request from the office: admin@libraschool.co.uk / 01598 740044

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